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MONDAY, MAY 11TH, 1857.

JAMES HENTHORN TODD, D. D., PRESIDENT,
in the Chair.

JAMES ANTHONY LAWSON, Q. C., was elected a Member of the Academy.

Professor Hennessy read a paper on the Distribution of Heat over the island of Great Britain.

The President read the following note :—

“ Sir William Rowan Hamilton wished to hand in a memorandum of the following ‘ General Expression by Quaternions, for Cones of the Third Order,’ which he hoped to be allowed to develope and illustrate at some subsequent meeting of the Academy during the present Session. The equation in question is,

$$Sq\rho q'\rho q''\rho = 0; \quad (A)$$

where ρ is the variable vector (or side) of the cone of the third order, drawn from its vertex as the origin; while q, q', q'' , are three arbitrary but constant quaternions, which may be regarded as fixed parameters of the surface.”

The following Memorial to Lord Palmerston was read:—

“ *To the Right Honourable Lord Palmerston, &c., &c.*

“ MAY IT PLEASE YOUR LORDSHIP,

“ We, the President and Members of the Royal Irish Academy, beg leave to address you on a subject of great scientific interest and importance.

“ We have learned with much regret that the Lords of the Admiralty have decided upon abandoning all further

search in the Arctic regions for the missing ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*, and that, in consequence, Lady Franklin has purchased a screw schooner yacht, which she is about to send out at her own private expense.

“We trust that your Lordship will not consider it unbecoming in a body like the Royal Irish Academy, one of whose main objects is the promotion of scientific inquiry, if we venture to solicit your Lordship’s influence with the Lords of the Admiralty to induce them to reconsider their decision.

“We have heard that a petition from several influential merchants of New York has recently been presented to their Lordships, praying that the *Resolute* should be fitted out at the expense of the Government, for further Arctic exploration in search of the remains of the lost expedition.

“We beg leave to express our earnest hope that the principle of this request may be complied with; and, without dwelling on the philanthropic objects that may be attained by such an expedition, we beg to submit to your Lordship’s consideration the following particulars, in which we conceive the interests of science are deeply concerned:—

“1. There can be little doubt that the *Erebus* and *Terror* must be in existence; and it is more than probable, from the known practice of officers engaged in Arctic research, that if even the wrecks of these vessels could be discovered, there would be found near them buried copies of the scientific observations made by Sir John Franklin and Captain Crozier, in the early part of their expedition; and it is needless to say that such observations would now be of the highest scientific value.

“2. The region within which the missing ships must lie is circumscribed within narrow limits, and is a region of the greatest scientific interest, from its proximity to the North Magnetic Pole. The extent of coast line already traversed by Government searching expeditions is 6500 miles, leaving to be discovered 370 miles only.

“ 3. It may be said that the scientific results of the former expeditions have been of little value ; but of this it is impossible to judge until the Tidal, Magnetical, and Meteorological observations made during these expeditions have been published by the Admiralty. The scientific world have had, as yet, no opportunity of studying those observations, and, consequently, their value has been very unfairly assumed to be but small.

“ 4. Of the commercial importance of previous Arctic expeditions there can, however, be no second opinion. The cod fishery of Newfoundland was discovered by Sir H. Gilbert ; the great whale fishery of West Greenland by Davis ; and that of the north and north-west of Baffin’s Bay by Sir John Ross ; that of Lancaster Sound, Barrow Strait, and Prince Regent Inlet, by Parry ; and that of Behring’s Straits by Beechey ; while to Hudson is due the discovery of the fur trade, since carried on with such profit by the Great Fur Company.

“ 5. The set of the tides has proved that there is a water communication between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, in the region proposed to be searched by Lady Franklin’s expedition. Collinson’s voyage has established the fact that the N. and N. W. coast of the American continent can be safely navigated for about 1400 miles east and west. If, therefore, there be a north-west passage, it must, in all probability, exist in the region where the Erebus and Terror may be expected to be found, and Lady Franklin’s expedition, we may reasonably hope, if it be properly supported, will lead to the final settlement of the question.

“ 6. Further attempts at Arctic researches are often deprecated on the ground of their danger to the lives of the officers and men engaged in them. But we would represent to your Lordship that this is a mistake. The rate of mortality in all the Arctic expeditions (exclusive of the missing one under Sir John Franklin) is under $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. per

annum ; and this low rate, with other reasons, has rendered Arctic service extremely popular both with officers and men.

“ 7. It will not be necessary, for the complete exploration of the area in question, to penetrate so far north as to encounter the greatest danger incident to Arctic navigation, namely, the detention of the ships by ice. And in the event of such detention, or any serious accident, such as crushing of the vessels by the ice, the crews can easily escape with sledges and boats, either to the whalers, or to one of the three great dépôts of provisions at Port Leopold, Beechey Island, and Melville Island, as was done by the crews under the command of Sir Edward Belcher, when, in obedience to his instructions, he was obliged to abandon his ships. ‘There is *now* no known position, however remote’ (we quote the words of Captain M’Clintock, in a communication recently made by him to the Royal Dublin Society), ‘from which a well-equipped crew could not effect their escape by their own unaided efforts. We felt this; and by our experience, gained in a cause more glorious than ever men embarked in, have secured to all future Arctic explorers a plan by which they may rejoin their fellow-men.’

“ In conclusion, we would earnestly entreat your Lordship not to permit this opportunity to be lost. Many circumstances, to some of which we have adverted, combine to create reasonable grounds of hope that the expedition now projected by Lady Franklin, if it should receive the assistance of her Majesty’s Government, will be productive of important results. It is now well ascertained that all former expeditions sent out in search of Sir John Franklin had taken a direction too northerly, and that a single year may now suffice to explore the region in which the missing ships must lie. Captain M’Clintock, to whom Lady Franklin, with permission of the Admiralty, has intrusted the command of her schooner, proposes to make his way down Prince Regent’s Inlet, and thence, through Bellot’s Strait, to pass at once into the field

of search, and, if necessary, to conduct the search by sledging parties, in the use of which that officer has already had experience during the three Arctic expeditions in which he has so highly distinguished himself.

“We trust, therefore, were it only for the honour of England, that the ship so nobly restored to her Majesty by the people of the United States—a ship admirably adapted for the service—will be now sent out to aid the noble attempt of Lady Franklin to recover some tidings of the melancholy fate of her lamented husband and his companions, that she may have the gratification of receiving from the Government of her own country that sympathy which the citizens of New York, the Government of the United States, and, we may be permitted to add, the educated public of England and of this country, have already manifested in her behalf.

“Given in the name and under the corporate seal of the Royal Irish Academy, this 2nd day of May, 1857.

(Signed)

“JAMES H. TODD, D. D.,
“*President.*”

It was moved by the Rev. Samuel Haughton, and seconded by the Rev. J. H. Jellett:—

“That the Secretary of the Council of the Academy be requested to forward to the Secretary of the Shipowners’ Association of Liverpool a copy of the President’s Memorial to Lord Palmerston, and to ask for the co-operation of that body with the Royal Irish Academy.”

A letter from J. Beete Jukes, Esq., was read, presenting twenty-one maps of the Geological Survey of Ireland by Sir R. J. Murchison, on the part of her Majesty’s Government.

A geometrical projection of two-thirds of the sphere, by Lieutenant-Colonel H. James, R. E., &c., was presented.

The fragments of an iron sword, found near St. John's Point, county of Down, were presented by Major Brown.

The list of books presented to the Library since the last meeting was read.

Thanks were returned to the several donors.